

parents, Mrs. Millard, Mrs. Stephens, Mrs. Elliott and Mrs. Vaughan.

*(Applause.)*

DELEGATE JAMES (presiding): I will have the Clerk read the amendment.

READING CLERK: Amendment No. 24, to accompany Minority Report No. R&P-1(c) to Committee Recommendation N. R&P-1, by Delegates Beachley, Bothe, Burgess, Child, Dabrowski, Groh, Hardwicke, Kosakowski, Mitchell, E. C. Murray, Price, Taylor, Weidemeyer, Willoner:

On page 4 following section 14 added by Amendment No. 21 add the following new section:

"Section —, Freedom of Information.

All governmental proceedings, meetings, and records shall be open to the people and prior notice of such proceedings or meetings shall be provided, except as otherwise prescribed by public general law."

DELEGATE WILLONER: I yield three minutes to Delegate Maurer.

DELEGATE MAURER: Mr. Chairman, I rise to support the amendment to manage the growth of government services and to provide a more energetic and robust state government. We have strengthened the executive, made the legislative more visible, given more power to local governments, and provided for intergovernmental bodies.

I have wondered what we should do to strengthen the hands of citizens who will have to have meaningful information on which to base their judgments about operations of state and local governments, and the actions of the officials who represent them.

My answer is that the right to know is a necessary and valuable safeguard which we should add to our constitution with the opportunity for the legislature to take a comprehensive view of the entire field of government and to make such determination of the areas which are to be protected as they deem wise.

New York's recent constitutional convention pioneered a section on access to government records, and that section was hailed as one of the important achievements of that convention.

It stemmed in part from a controversy concerning the New York Port Authority which refused to make public some of its records. The problem basically, as it appeared to me, was that it was the desire

of the Authority not to disclose its funding policy, and I think that we are not without this kind of a problem in Maryland. I think it is the kind of a problem which may grow.

I would like to call to your attention a problem with the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission. In a series of articles which appeared in the fall of 1966, Dr. Francis Tanney concluded that the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission through its water pricing policies fostered consumer ignorance and greatly encouraged inefficiency.

How can the citizens know what water costs are when there are seven different charges for water, some direct, some indirect, some on tax bills, some paid to the county, and some on bills paid to the commission?

Indeed, the question, now and in our county minutes of 10-24-67, was summarized as a staff report to the council which recommended that the WSSC five-year program legislation should be amended to make it clear in the legislature that the WSSC's overall method of funding its various capital projects should be outlined in the program, including the general statement as to the use of ad valorem versus front-foot benefit versus user charges benefit, and so forth as an indication of the program's impact on these various financing programs.

The right to know goes beyond this. It goes to all aspects of government. I think it is important that we add it to the constitution.

*(President H. Vernon Eney resumed the Chair).*

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Kiefer.

DELEGATE KIEFER: I yield three minutes to Delegate Winslow.

DELEGATE WINSLOW: Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to this amendment as a part of the constitution. I am extremely reluctant to oppose the idea that we should have admission to our public proceedings and our public records. However, I suggest that the amendment as drawn is an extremely uncertain thing which has become very clear in the question and answer period.

The amendment as drawn suggests that all governmental proceedings, meetings and records shall be open except as otherwise prescribed by public general law. This exception gives me a great deal of trouble for at least fifty-seven various reasons in